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The Waterman's Children

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THE WATERMAN'S CHILDREN

We hear his feet in thick boots
clattering the shells
as he drags the soggy nets
over the stern of the boat,
and the pinebark whisper of his breath
as he hangs the lines
from one tree to another.

We watch his face
coming onto the porch
like something from the sun,
deep red, so deep it is brown,
wrinkle on wrinkle,
turning to the father
we know, the eyes
lost among tight waves.

We feel his hands, so scarred
they're the shells of oysters.
Cut skin of the knuckles,
he comes at night and touches
our foreheads with his palm.
The inside we feel
has no pearl to disturb us.